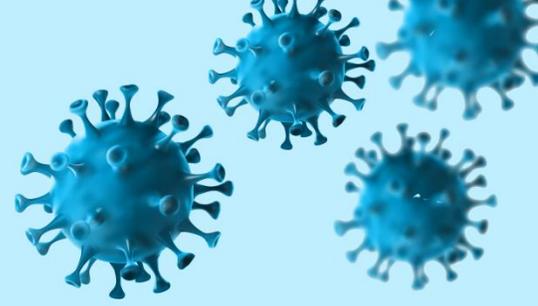


COVID-19 FACT SHEET

Health & Wellness for Physicians



STAY WELL DURING THE PANDEMIC

As we are now well aware, responding to COVID-19 in Manitoba is a marathon, not a sprint. Even with physical distancing and other public health measures in place, it is unknown how long the coronavirus pandemic will last. We have put together this checklist to help you lessen risks to your physical and mental health over the short and long term. Many of these tips apply to practicing physicians, medical learners and retired physicians.

CHECKLIST:



Follow precautions at work to avoid getting infected:

- Stay [up-to-date](#) and follow current [Shared Health PPE requirements](#) (personal protective equipment), taking time to review [physician specific PPE information](#).
- [Order PPE supplies](#) as needed, including masks, gloves, gowns, eye protection and sanitizer.



Follow advice outside of work to slow the spread of COVID-19, including:

- Practice [proper hand hygiene, cough etiquette](#), and [physical distancing](#).
- Clean surfaces often to kill or remove germs.
- Wear masks when physical distancing is not possible or when required.
- Follow public health advice regarding large gatherings, traveling, and self-isolation. Be aware of the current [Pandemic Response System](#) level for your area.
- Stay home if you are ill. Seek [guidance from Occupational Health Services](#) at 1-888-203-4066.



Support your family's health and wellness:

- Ensure your family knows the medical advice to slow the spread (see above)
- Plan for child care and other supports your family may need in the event of school and child care closures. [Contact Family Services](#) for child care support as an essential services worker.
- Establish a routine protocol when returning home from work that may include changing clothes and possibly shoes before or upon arriving home, transporting clothes in a washable cloth or disposable plastic bag.
- Talk about how your household will [care for a person with COVID-19 and reduce the risk of infection](#) to others in your home. Where possible the plan may include a designated bathroom and separate sleeping arrangement.
- Be aware of supports and benefits to [support your financial health](#).
- If you need assistance in the event of isolation or illness, [reach out for support](#).

Health & Wellness for Physicians



Consider your own physical and mental health:

Attending to our own physical, mental, emotional needs is key to getting through stressful times and to helping others do the same. It is important to find the strategies that work for you. Some evidence-informed wellness strategies include:ⁱ

- Eat nutritious food, make time for movement and fresh air, take breaks and seek sufficient rest and respite. Be cautious about coping strategies like smoking, drugs and alcohol.
- Try deep breathing and/or mindfulness. Deep breathing increases parasympathetic tone. Mindfulness practice can enhance well-being, diminish self-criticism, and increase self-compassion. Explore manageable [micro-practices](#). Some subscription apps are providing free access to health care providers. Sample applications include:
 - [Ten Percent Happier](#)
 - [CalmHealth](#)
- Make time to connect with family and friends. If there are concerns about potential COVID-19 exposure consider low risk ways of connecting (e.g. outdoor walks). Take a break from video and try audio calls.
- Assess your consumption of evolving research, media, and social media. Consider positive vs negative impacts on time or emotional state. Set limits as needed.
- Recall and reflect on the positive ways you have managed stressful situations in the past.
- Become aware of your own emotions. Anger, sadness, fear, and optimism are all normal. Try to accept each emotion and focus on what you can control and influence.
- Consider your values and how they can shape your behaviour during the pandemic response.
- Reflect on the most meaningful aspects of work for you. Try to spend [20% of your time](#) on those activities.

Be alert to signs of fatigue, stress, anxiety, irritability or other early warning signs of distress and burnout. Readjust strategies as needed. **Ask for help when you need it. It is a sign of strength.**



Members have access to a number of health and wellness resources, including the Physician and Family Support Program with counselling or referrals **available 24/7 to you and anyone living within your household**. [Learn more](#) about this and other resources.



Connect with peers and support a healthy workplace:

- We know that even the most [resilient physicians can be impacted by their work environment](#) and that [organizational interventions](#) have a big role to play in physician wellness.
- Promote and advocate for psychological safety and organizational fairness, especially when resources, workloads and values are stretched. Trust and fairness decreases worry and increases engagement. Make it comfortable for colleagues and team members to ask questions.ⁱⁱ
- Help colleagues to reframe blame. Under pressure, blame and criticism may arise and hinder constructive feedback, problem solving, accountability and team performance.
- Be understanding and compassionate with colleagues. Everyone handles stress and anxiety differently.
- Find a peer that you can talk to and who can talk to you. As physicians, you will understand what each other are going through. Talking to your colleagues can be very helpful, whether about workplace challenges or how you are managing outside of work.
- [Physicians at Risk](#) provides in-person peer support. For more information call 204-237-8320. If you are outside of Winnipeg, Doctors Manitoba can help connect you with a peer.
- Reflect on lessons learned so far and potential opportunities to maintain or implement improvements. Assess new technology or training needs and take steps to have these needs met.
- As a leader, be transparent and provide clear information and messages. Ask questions about needs and concerns. Provide assurances that the team and their families will be supported and develop follow-through plans.

Health & Wellness for Physicians



Prepare for ethical dilemmas and moral questions

There are many ethical concerns we might expect during a pandemic, including prioritizing access with limited resources, advance care planning with patients, and a duty to provide care with risks to your own health.

Being prepared for difficult decisions does not make these decisions easier but it can help you feel more confident in your decisions. Shared Health has developed an [ethics framework](#) to support clinical, policy and business decisions related to COVID-19. They have also compiled links to additional ethics information including regional ethics guide.

ⁱ Resources consulted for this section include Worley, L. and Stonnington, C., 2017. Self-Care, Resilience, and Work-Life Balance. In: K. Brower and M. Riba, ed., *Physician Mental Health and Well-Being*. Springer International Publishing, pp.237-263; Seabrook EM, Kern ML, Rickard NS. Social Networking Sites, Depression, and Anxiety: A Systematic Review. *JMIR Ment Health*. 2016;3(4):e50. Published 2016 Nov 23. doi:10.2196/mental.5842; Swami MK, Mathur DM, Pushp BK. Emotional intelligence, Perceived Stress and Burnout Among Resident Doctors: An Assessment of the Relationship. *Natl Med J India*. 2013;26(4):210-213.

ⁱⁱ This bullet and the latter adapted from [Resilience and stress inoculation during COVID-19](#) (Ontario Medical Association)